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part of this book might be quoted verbatim, and the remainder would deserve careful perusal by the writer of a more pretentious biography.

The first six chapters deal with Mr. Beecher's ancestry and early life and surroundings, and a great deal is told in his own words. Much is not new, but it is very charming reading and very naturally told. We can well picture young Henry at school learning grammar. "Now, Henry, *a* is the definite article, and must be used with a singular noun. You can say *a man* but you can't say *a men*, can you?" "Yes, I can; father always says '*amen*' at the end of his prayers." The Calvinistic training to which he was subjected in early life and its influence upon him are depicted with candor. He says: "I never had the remotest idea of God except that he was a sovereign who sat with a sceptre in his hand, and had his eye on me, and said, 'I see you and I am after you!'" But the home influences of his youth were far from gloomy, notwithstanding their strong Puritanism.

The period from his entrance to college life until his call to Brooklyn is disposed of in four chapters. Two chapters are given to his early experiences in his new pastoral field, and then follow ten chapters concerning his more distinctively public career as the champion of the slave, supplemented by a chapter on the "silver wedding." Three chapters are devoted to the great scandal, and whatever may be said about the policy of introducing so unsavory a topic into these family memoirs, it seems to us that the compilers of this history had no choice. In their view it was from first to last a great conspiracy, in which truth came out victorious, though at terrible cost. To blot out events of such momentous interest in Mr. Beecher's life is impossible, and to attempt to ignore them would therefore be foolish. Perhaps less might have been written without detriment to the history, but some allowance must surely be made for the warmth and zeal of an advocacy sustained by such tender, and powerful sentiments and convictions.

The rest of the book—chapters 27 to 32—concerns itself with the later personal history of Mr. Beecher, with sketches and estimates of the man from various points of view. His home life in the city and country are well described, and the closing chapter gives an account of his last journey to England, and of his sickness and death.

We wish that greater care had been taken in the matter of the illustrations. The portrait in the frontispiece is very fine, but many of the other pictures are rather mean affairs. On the whole, the book is one of singular interest, and will, we think, grow in public favor.

## II.

### BIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE PERKINS MARSH.

THE first volume of the life and letters of George Perkins Marsh,\* edited by his wife, appears in a handsome and substantial dress. The contents are slightly disappointing, partly because the most important period in the life of this distinguished scholar and diplomat, namely, his residence as United States Minister in Italy, is barely mentioned in the close of the volume, and its consideration reserved for the second volume. The record of the life of a literary man, unless closely connected with leading historical events or brilliantly irradiated by the light of genius, is unfrequently of sufficient interest to warrant extension beyond a single volume. And, although Mr. Marsh holds a high and worthy position among the men of his time, and has made valuable contributions to the etymology and history of our language, it may be questioned whether this work of nearly five

\*"Life and Letters of George Perkins Marsh." Compiled by Caroline Crane Marsh. In two volumes. Vol. I. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

hundred pages ought not to contain all that this literature-ridden age will find time to read.

In George Perkins Marsh sturdy New England parentage and education combined to produce an upright, intelligent, substantial man. In the Senate Chamber at Washington Mr. Marsh ably represented his State during Mr. Polk's presidency, and at once allied himself with men of integrity and influence, and was the recognized supporter of all philanthropic and patriotic measures. The period of his Washington life was enriched by private linguistic study and research, and by the acquaintance of men of affairs from other countries. Following this came the appointment as Minister to Turkey, residence in Constantinople, and extended travels in Europe and the East. The only literary work of importance, noted in this volume, is the series of lectures on the English language, which, delivered at the Old Union Theological Seminary on University Place, and afterwards revised for publication, have a value too well known to render comment necessary.

An extended appendix contains some valuable matter, including a scholarly address on Human Knowledge, delivered to the Massachusetts Alpha of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, in 1847, and a speech on the Mexican War, in the House of Representatives, the year following.

### III.

#### MAXIMINA.

In a certain sense, "*Maximina*"\* is intensely realistic. The plot is simple; the incidents few and easily foreseen. The chief interest lies in the development of the characters, and these are admirably sketched, and quite the same as those with which one's fancy peoples the land of the Alhambra. The stately dons, and fascinating signorinas, and the sly, merciless villain, all appear in correct Spanish garb. The foremost figure, however, sweet *Maximina* herself, is not the voluptuous lace-crowned beauty, sitting in her *galerie* of roses and wickedly flirting from behind her fan. *Maximina* is a shy, delicate, modest maiden, whose attributes are rather those of the North and West. She has abundance of reserve force, however, and a degree of conscientiousness quite foreign to the feminine Spaniard of the ordinary romance. Possibly the similarity of name suggests the strong and womanly heroine of "*Ramona*." *Maximina* is a feminine *Ramona*, if such a term may be employed concerning a creation which is not at all masculine. The temptations of *Maximina* were in a different direction from those of Mrs. Hunt's heroine. The exigencies which made of *Ramona* a strong and judicious counsellor are wanting in the history of *Maximina*; but bad they arisen, we have confidence in her ability to meet them with praiseworthy discretion. The charm of *Maximina*'s character is quite beyond description or analysis, so delicately human, and so humanly angelic is its delineation. The husband is no worse, perhaps rather better, than most of his class. We never feel quite assured of his constancy until the perplexities of poverty have silenced the evil and nurtured the good that is in him. He contrasts most agreeably with *Maximina*, and each furnishes an effective background for the other. While the introduction of the villainous Don Alfonso adds to the incident of the book, it certainly detracts from its purity. The coarseness and indelicacy which accompany the recital of the escapades of this clever knave, combined with certain other details which were much better omitted, greatly mar the perfection of this otherwise charming story of Spanish life and character.

\* "*Maximina*." By Don Armando Palacio Valdés. Translated from the Spanish by Nathan Haskell Dole. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.